

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L LAGOS 10895

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PGOV, PDEV, NI, SHUM
SUBJECT: FEDECO: THE VOTER ROLL WILL APPEAR ON SEPTEMBER 15

REF: (A) LAGOS 6772, (B) LAGOS 5953, (C) LAGOS 5201

1. IN AN AUGUST 30 PRESS CONFERENCE IN LAGOS, FEDERAL ELECTORAL COMMISSION (FEDECO) CHAIRMAN CHIEF MICHAEL ANI ANNOUNCED THAT THE VOTER REGISTRATION ROLL WILL GO ON PUBLIC DISPLAY ON SEPTEMBER 15 WHILE THE DELIMITATION OF ELECTORAL CONSTITUENCIES WILL BE ANNOUNCED ON SEPTEMBER 22. ACCORDING TO CHIEF ANI:

-- THE 47.5 MILLION VOTER REGISTRATION LIST WILL BE ON DISPLAY AT PUBLIC PLACES THROUGHOUT NIGERIA SEPTEMBER 15-29. IN THAT REGARD, ANI SAID, "AS FROM THE FIRST WEEK OF SEPTEMBER, MY COLLEAGUES IN THE STATES WILL COMMENCE PUBLIC ENLIGHTENMENT EXERCISES, CONCERNING THE DISPLAY AND REVISION OF THE PRELIMINARY REGISTER." ANI ADDED THAT DURING THE DISPLAY PERIOD, OBJECTIONS TO NAMES WOULD BE ACCEPTED ON PRESCRIBED FORMS ACCOMPANIED BY A 20 NAIRA REFUNDABLE DEPOSIT (PRESUMABLY TO BE REFUNDED IF THE OBJECTION PROVES TO BE VALID). FURTHERMORE, UNREGISTERED VOTERS MAY BE ADDED TO ROLLS DURING THIS PERIOD IF THEY CAN PROVIDE EVIDENCE THAT THEY WERE ABSENT FROM THE COUNTRY, ILL, OR IN JAIL DURING THE ORIGINAL REGISTRATION EXERCISE. A FINAL REGISTER WILL THEN BE PRODUCED, HOPEFULLY BY THE END OF THE YEAR.
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-- THE DELIMITATION OF CONSTITUENCIES FOR SENATE AND HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES SEATS IN THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY AS WELL AS FOR STATE ASSEMBLY DISTRICTS WILL BE ANNOUNCED ON SEPTEMBER 22.
-- SOMETIME AFTER SEPTEMBER 22 FEDECO WILL PUBLISH THE GUIDELINES FOR THE REGISTRATION OF POLITICAL PARTIES.

2. IN MAKING THESE ANNOUNCEMENTS, ACCORDING TO PRESS REPORTS,

ANI REFUSED TO ENTERTAIN ANY QUESTIONS FROM THE PRESS AND ADDED, "YOU WILL AGREE THAT OUR ASSIGNMENT DEMANDS, IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST, THAT STATEMENTS MADE AT ANY TIME SHOULD BE FACTUAL, TO THE POINT AND DEVOID OF ANYTHING THAT COULD GENERATE SPECULATION AND CONTROVERSY.

3. COMMENT: AFTER A YEAR OF SOMETIMES FEVERED, SOMETIMES SLUGGISH ACTIVITY, IT APPEARS THAT AT LONG LAST IT IS SHOW-AND-TELL TIME FOR FEDECO. IN PARTICULAR, WE MAY FINALLY GET WITHIN-STATE FIGURES AND PUBLIC COMMENTARY WHICH MAY INDICATE TO WHAT DEGREE FEDECO'S ELECTORAL OPERATION IS CONGUEENT WITH NIGERIA'S DEMOGRAPHIC REALITY. GIVEN THE SCALE OF WHAT FEDECO WAS ASKED TO DO, ITS LIMITED RESOURCES, AND THE DEMOGRAPHIC COMPLEXITIES OF NIGERIAN SOCIETY, WE WOULD EXPECT THAT FEDECO'S ACCOMPLISHMENTS WILL PRODUCE CONSIDERABLE CONTROVERSY. IN THAT REGARD, FEDECO'S LAGOS STATE COMMISSIONER, CHIEF ALADE ODUNewa, WHO JOINED CHIEF ANI AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE, LATER GLOOMILY TOLD THE EMBASSY LABOR/POLITICAL ASSISTANT IN CONFIDENCE THAT HE EXPECTS A REAL POLITICAL "CRISIS" TO ERUPT IN SEPTEMBER AND OCTOBER. WITHOUT BEING SPECIFIC, HE IMPLIED THAT SUCH A CRISIS WOULD BE RELATED TO WHAT FEDECO HAS BEEN DOING, PARTICULARLY IN TERMS OF CONSTITUENCY DELIMITATION.

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